Understanding Multicultural Education

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Abstract

With the shifting cultural texture and demographics of the United States (Banks, 2006b; Irvine, 2003), redefining multicultural education has become imperative. There are many views on the benefits and/or shortcomings of the multiculturalization of education. The question is not whether a multicultural education should be adopted but it is rather what we understand from multicultural education and how we are going to initiate such a reform within an educational system when we cannot even define 'multicultural.' "The awareness of one's own assumptions, prejudices and stereotypes is a first step to be able to positively interact and learn from others. In this process lies the essence of intercultural learning" (Martins, 2008, p. 203). This paper attempts to define (and redefine) multicultural education, explain its shortcomings, and offer recommendations for further discussion.

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multicultural education theory and policy. The purpose of this study was to further investigate teacher perceptions of the factors in schools that affect the gaps between theories, practice and policy. Seven teachers who embrace multicultural education and work in urban secondary schools serving large populations of students of color were interviewed to further explore their experiences when implementing multicultural practices in their classroom.